

11-1-1987

Macalester Today November 1987

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MACALESTER TODAY

November 1987

A unique language program
maps students' fluency

Marketing reaps reward:
a strong freshman class

A backward glance
on an alum's new novel



LETTERS

We welcome readers' opinions of recent articles. Please send letters intended for publication to Letters to the Editor, Macalester Today, Public Relations and Publications Department, Macalester College, 1600 Grand Ave., Saint Paul, MN 55105. Letters for the February issue must arrive by Dec. 1; others will be held for May. We reserve the right to edit letters for conciseness and clarity.

One last assignment

It was with fond recollection that I read your feature recalling the late Ivan Burg [longtime Macalester journalism professor and a member of the class of 1934] in the August issue.

I regret having been unable to attend the gathering in his honor which provided many of the memories contained in the article. My own thoughts of Professor Burg span some 20 years, from frosh orientation in the fall of '64, when we met, to his funeral, when we said goodbye.

After his retirement we would periodically get together for lunch. During this time he called one day with a request: Would I consider submitting his name for Macalester's Distinguished Citizen Citation? Lest his intentions be misinterpreted, I never felt he was engaging in an act of potential self-promotion. Rather, call it a desire for recognition for all he and his students had done to further the school's image.

I gladly agreed to write the committee on his behalf and thought then (as I do now) how ironic the situation was—my aging J prof giving me one last assignment. Perhaps my skills were not up to the task, for nothing came of it. I know he was disappointed and so was I, both for Ivan as well as for those of us who took joy in our relationships with him and our mutual efforts.

Now I write my fellow Macites through this medium with a suggestion: it is not too late to honor Ivan Burg with the school's DCC. The citation could be presented posthumously in honor of the professor to his widow, Delores. I call upon like-minded individuals to join me in urg-

ing President Gavin to lobby for this long-overdue recognition.

Steven T. Moravec '68
Saint Paul

The Distinguished Citizen Citation honors Macalester graduates who have made significant contributions to society; recipients are chosen each year by the Macalester Alumni Association's citations committee. See page 26 in this issue for nomination information.

Some journalism alumni are also working to establish a Macalester scholarship in Burg's name. If you're interested in contributing, write to Debra Saggau Fish '72, Development Office, Macalester College, 1600 Grand Ave., Saint Paul, MN 55105.

—Editor

To this alum, Mac means integrity

Boy, it just goes to show that Macalester can have wildly different meanings to different people! I'm from the class of 1980, and my husband, Grant Davies, is from the class of 1979. Although we've both maintained a lot of friends from that time, neither they nor we have ever had to resort to activities like lobbying for the tobacco industry or writing speeches for Ed Meese ["Forum: Drug Testing in the Workplace," August].

Yes, there have been some lean times, but we've always thought integrity was more important than money. And we think our experience at Macalester reinforced this value.

Norah Elson-Sudia Davies '80
Saint Paul

Passion for justice inspired 'a great and good man'

Emeritus professor Hugo Thompson, who died at the age of 86 at his retirement home in Black Mountain, N.C. [Class Notes, "In Memoriam," May], came to Macalester as professor of philosophy in 1943. He continued as chairman of the department during most of his 25 years there.

With the greatest of the philosophers, Hugo Thompson held that the wisdom

LETTERS continued on page 28

From the Editor

Employee drug testing? The 'nays' (barely) have it

In the August *Macalester Today*, we invited you, our 24,000 readers, to judge an on-paper debate on drug testing in the workplace. In that issue, attorney Dwight Rabuse '79 (of the U.S. Attorney General's office) had taken the "pro" side of the question, arguing that testing employees for drugs does not represent an unwarranted violation of privacy, while our two 1987 student forensics stars, Paul Benson and Molly McGinnis, had taken the "con" side.

Your ballots provided us with much lively reading up to the Sept. 15 deadline. In all, 64 people responded from 22 states, and the vote was extremely close—31 "pro" and 33 "con." Two votes alone made Benson and McGinnis the winners.

Although we encouraged people to vote anonymously, nearly half our respondents included their names—and all the ballots, of course, were postmarked. So we took the opportunity to make a rough and completely unscientific analysis of your votes.

Among alumni, we found, one of the sharpest points of division was age. People who graduated from Macalester before 1960 were three times more likely to favor drug testing than not, while post-1960 graduates were six-to-one against it. And of those who identified themselves as parents of current or past students, all came down on the Benson-McGinnis side.

Geographically speaking, midwesterners, southerners, and westerners were about equally divided between the two positions. But if it had been up to the Minnesota residents alone (28 of them), Rabuse would have won by four votes. Similarly, easterners voted 5-3 for Benson and McGinnis.

Many of you responded with comments, ranging from "Excellent article!" (from outstate Minnesota) and "They both presented good cases" (Illinois) to

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ABOUT THIS ISSUE



Cover photo of Deborah G. Martin, a freshman from Michigan who is a student in visiting professor Reiner Vollmer's German-language geography class, by Jim Hansen. Our story on Macalester's unique language program begins on p. 6.

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Macalester Today (Volume 76, Number 1) is published by Macalester College. It is mailed free of charge to alumni and friends of the College four times a year. Circulation is 24,000.

For change of address, please write: Alumni Office, Macalester College, 1600 Grand Avenue, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55105.

To submit information for class notes section, please write: Class Notes Editor, Alumni Office, Macalester College, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55105.

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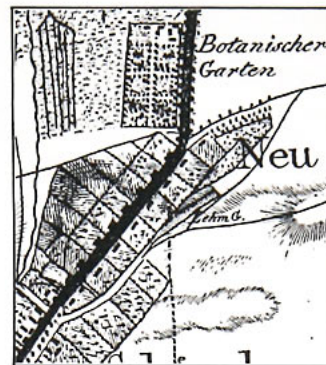
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Charles Baxter '69's insightful new novel is worth a second look.

by Micheal J Thompson '81





All the necessities of life

It was moving-in day for Macalester students—including nearly 450 freshmen, for whom orientation was Sept. 2–7 this year. Tearful good-byes (and reunions) filled the sidewalks. Residence-hall doors were open wide for the onslaught of footlockers, duffel bags, laundry detergent—everything necessary for a comfortable year away from home.



Upper left: Holding wicker chest, Suzanne Vargo '88 (right) and Stephanie Veatch '90, both members of the freshman-orientation staff, help move a student's belongings into Doty Hall. Above: Pamela Washington '90 (right) helps out a new freshman.



Above right: Peter Dysart '90, Jake Masalski '91, Debra Simpson '90, and Sonya Sezun '90 tote Masalski's worldly goods into Bigelow Hall. Left: Amy Hagstrom '89 (in Springfest T-shirt) hugs a friend outside the Student Union.





Jim Hansen

Nobel Prize-winning physicist Rosalyn Yalow, of the Bronx (N.Y.) Veterans Administration Hospital, addressed Professor Janet Serie's upper-level class in immunology in September. During her three-day visit to campus as part of the Wallace Distinguished Visitors Program, Yalow (who won the 1977 Nobel Prize in medicine) visited many classes, worked individually with faculty members and students, and gave a Convocation address on radiation.

Radiation not alarming, laureate tells audience

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To the sounds of bagpipes and the first fall rain, Nobel laureate Rosalyn Yalow opened the 1987-88 Wallace Distinguished Visitors Program with a presentation Sept. 10 on "Radiation and Society: Assessing the Risk."

Yalow, the first of five "Distinguished Visitors" from the scientific community participating in this year's lecture series, told a large audience in Weyerhaeuser Chapel, "We are now unnecessarily frightened about radiation."

Yalow was awarded the Nobel Prize in medicine in 1977 for her development of radioimmunoassay, the use of radioactive isotopes to find and measure minute substances in blood and body tissues. Yalow and her colleague, the late Solomon Ber-son, first used the technique to measure

insulin in the blood of adult diabetics.

She said their research was rejected at first, and was only recognized later as a major development with applications to scores of medical problems.

"Unusual ideas are frequently rejected by the medical community," she said.

Yalow's research has benefited the diagnosis and treatment of thyroid disease, the early detection and prevention of infant mental retardation, and the screening of blood banks for contamination by the virus that causes hepatitis.

Radiation is not as dangerous as the public believes, Yalow said. She defended its use in medical science, citing common sources of radiation that we are all exposed to simply by living on the planet.

"All of us are exposed to radiation all the time," she said. Radiation from the sun, the soil, and our bodies does not pose a danger, she asserted.

Yalow said that airline crews flying above 33,000 feet, government officials

working within granite walls, and humans sleeping next to each other are all exposed to background radiation from the environment and each other.

Dose-rate comparisons have been studied in animals, but human data was not available until the Chernobyl nuclear-power-station accident, she said. Yalow said she does not expect [European] cancer rates to reach unusually high levels [as a result of the Chernobyl accident].

Yalow said the cancer death rate since 1930 has risen sharply—not because of pesticides or nuclear accidents or excessive exposure to radiation, she said, but because of smoking tobacco. Cancer of the lungs has now surpassed breast cancer as the most common type of cancer affecting women, she said.

She said there is no evidence that radiation exposure on a low level poses a danger to society. In response to questions about research citing evidence to the contrary, Yalow said, "These people simply aren't telling you the truth."

She said exaggerated fears about exposure skews the issue of radiation by disregarding balance and perspective.

Untruths and misunderstandings are usually discovered, "but that doesn't make the 10 o'clock news," she said.

Yalow, whose biography lists 39 honorary degrees and a similar number of major prizes in physics and medicine, also visited with classes and faculty members as part of her three-day visit to Macalester.

—Katherine Rowlands '88

Tenure suit filed against Macalester

Cynthia Orbovich, assistant professor of political science, filed a suit this September in Ramsey County District Court charging the college with breach of contract and sex discrimination in denying her tenure last June.

President Robert M. Gavin, Jr., has responded that the college will "vigorously" defend its action, and he denies the allegation in the complaint.

Orbovich was considered for tenure during the 1986-87 academic year. Provost James B. Stewart declined to grant tenure, and President Gavin supported Stewart's decision.



Jim Barbour Photography

A house of books unfolds

The walls of Macalester's new library, scheduled to open next fall, rose rapidly over the summer and early fall. Here, the northern exposure (left) and the portico roof (below) as they appeared in late September, six months after ground was broken.



Coming events include music, drama, dance

This partial list of Macalester events in the coming months is worth adding to your datebook! All are open to the public and most are free; call to get ticket prices.

Since this schedule is subject to last-minute changes, we urge you to double-check dates and times before making plans. A T in the listing indicates the theater box office, 612/696-6359; a C, the campus programs office, 612/696-6297.

Mon.—Fri., Nov. 2–6,
call for times

"AIDS Awareness Week" provides current information and extensive discussion on Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome, with talks by Scott Strickland, a Twin Cities physician; Richard Danila, supervisor of the AIDS unit of the Minnesota Department of Health; and philosophy professor Martin Gunderson (who will address the legal and ethical issues

raised by mandatory testing). Evening small-group discussions as well. Call the chaplain's office, 612/696-6298, for times (Chapel)

Wed., Nov. 4, 8 p.m.

Mayor J. E. Clark of Portland, Ore., discusses his city's approach to solving mass-transportation problems with light-rail transit. Part of Macalester's Mayors' Forum, sponsored in part by the geography department, 612/696-6291 (Concert Hall)

Sun., Nov. 8, 11:30 a.m.—4:30 p.m.

Open house at the admissions office, 612/696-6357 (Cochran Lounge)

Fri.—Sat., Nov. 13–14

Thurs.—Sat., Nov. 19–21, 8 p.m.

The Hot L Baltimore by Lanford Wilson (Theater) T

Fri., Dec. 4, 8 p.m.

Sat., Dec. 5, 7 p.m.

Festive dessert (Fri.) and dinner (Sat.). Call the music department, 612/696-6382, for further information (Cochran Lounge)

Thurs.—Sat., Dec. 10–12, 8 p.m.

Five independent choreographers, including Macalester faculty member Judith Howard, join in presenting a concert of their original works. Call the dance department, 612/696-6329, for further information (Theater)

Fri. Jan. 8, noon–8 p.m.

Sat. Jan. 9, 8 a.m.—6 p.m.

Macalester Invitational High School Debate Tournament. Call the speech communications department, 612/696-6340, for exact times and location
—David Eddleston

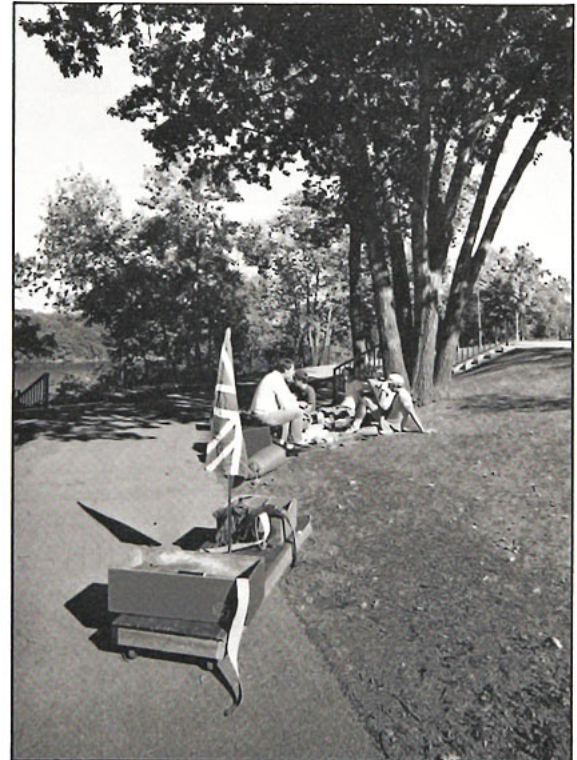


Jim Harbour

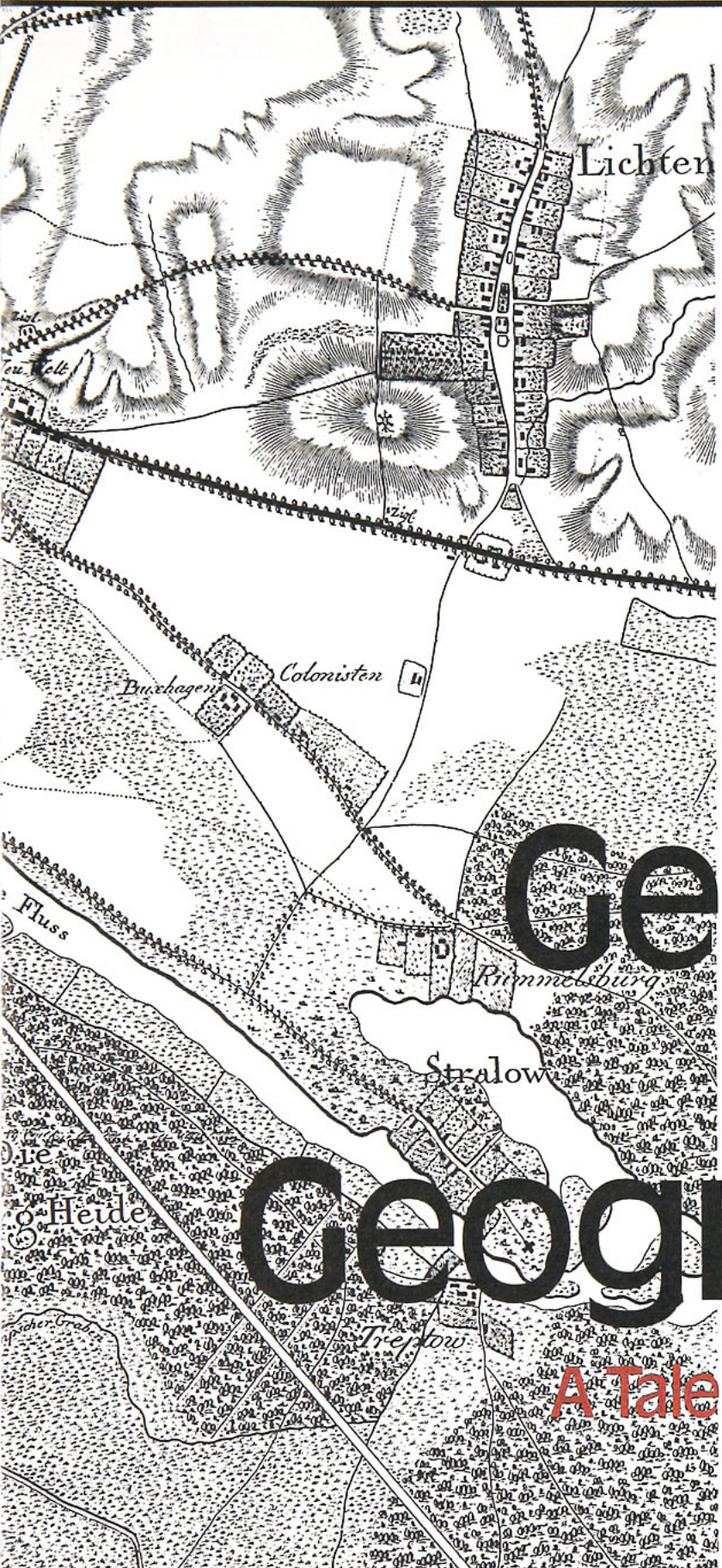


Theatrical labors

Labor Day took on a whole new meaning for the student actors in *Terra Nova*, the Ted Tally play about a South Pole expedition. To prepare for their re-enactment of Robert Scott's 1910 journey, director Sears Eldredge, chair of the dramatic-arts department, had his cast spend most of Sept. 7 dragging a heavy sled on the Mississippi riverbanks near campus. The play was performed last month in the Janet Wallace Fine Arts Center.







A unique academic 'bridge' teaches students to read a *Weltatlas* and understand the *economía informal*.

by Jack El-Hai

If, two years ago, you had glanced over the shoulders of students in Peruvian economist Jorge Vega's class on Latin American government, you might have been surprised at what you found in their notebooks. Instead of terms like "gross national product," "black market," and "squatters' towns," you'd read *producto nacional bruto*, *economía informal*, *pueblos jóvenes*. Although the subject was government, not literature or language, Vega taught his English-speaking class entirely in Spanish.

At the time, Vega says, he didn't know if teaching a complex subject in Spanish would work at Macalester. "It seemed unusual," he says.

It *was* unusual—probably a unique offering among U.S. colleges. Yet with that class, Vega became an integral part of an innovation in foreign-language instruction that Macalester has pioneered.

"Bridge" courses like Vega's (his was jointly offered by the political science and Spanish depart-

Gerunds & Geography: A Tale Told by an Idiom

ments) not only help students get quickly proficient in a foreign language—they also explore, in depth, subjects rarely encountered in traditional language classes.

A bridge course is actually two courses run concurrently: a “content course” led by a foreign scholar in his or her field of expertise—and in his or her native tongue—and a language course to help students with the speaking, listening, reading, and writing they need for the content course. For instance, an hour after Vega’s government class (which met four times a week), less fluent students attended a Spanish-language class, emphasizing political and economic terminology and taught by Macalester Spanish instructor Maria Elena Doleman.

Spanish isn’t the only language taught this way at Macalester. This fall, the college is offering a German bridge course: Fulbright scholar-in-residence Reiner Vollmer’s “Geography of Modern Europe,” taught in tandem with German and linguistics instructor Patricia Wilcox Peterson. Vollmer is on a one-semester appointment; he is acting professor at the University of Mainz (in West Germany, near Frankfurt).

Spanish instructor Doleman pinpoints the kind of student who most needs the courses: “The student

who is afraid to speak, or who is unsure of his or her writing,” she says—“those people will definitely get a lot of work. It’s good for them.”

Language students agree. “[Doleman’s class] was really good, because we discussed what [Vega] had talked about earlier in class,” remembers Shannon Burke ’89, who took Vega’s fall 1986 “Power and Society in Latin America.” “There were a lot of things I was uncertain about, and we would clear them up, even if it was just vocabulary.”

For her part, Maria Doleman says some of the most rewarding moments in the bridge course came during the lively debates later in the course, when the class divided into panels advocating opposing positions on issues introduced in Vega’s class.

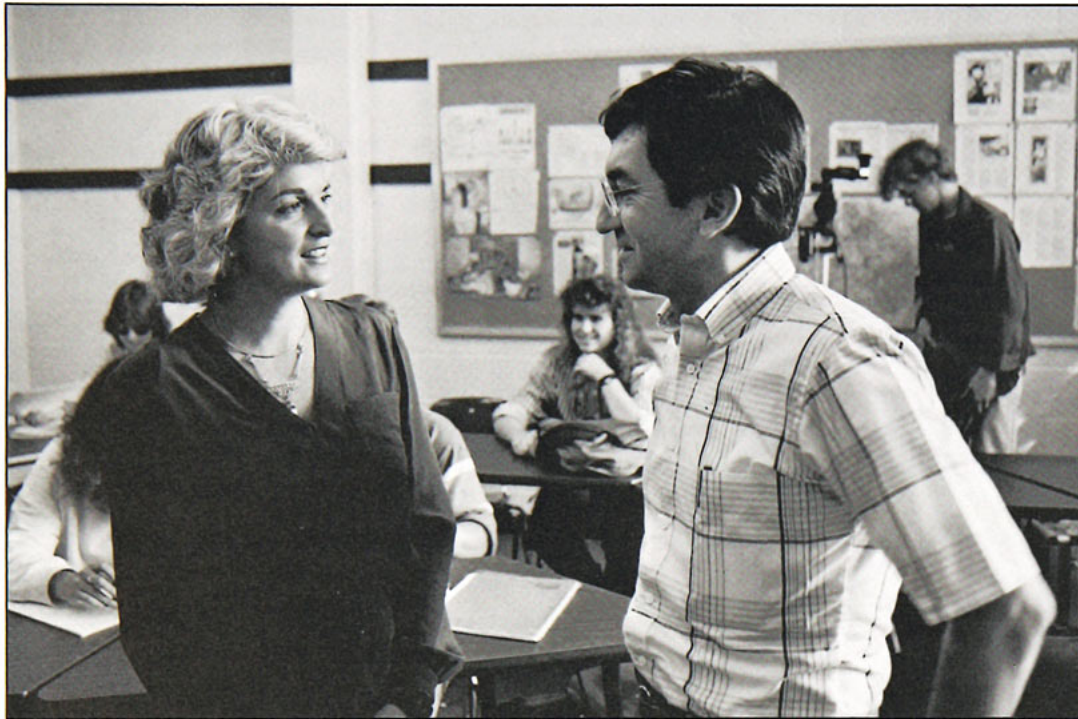
“They can’t believe—and I can’t believe—that these students, who at the beginning of the semester didn’t even understand what was going on, now have acquired a completely new concept... and are able to discuss it,” she says. “And they have the vocabulary to do it; they have the information to be able to back up what they’re saying with examples and details.”

In effect, the bridge program offers visiting professors the freedom to instruct in their native language without the burden of trying to communicate

Macalester has all the ingredients to make the bridge concept work: strong language departments, students attuned to international studies, and a history of cooperation between academic departments. And its small size doesn’t hurt.



German instructor Patricia Wilcox Peterson and Fulbright scholar-in-residence Reiner Vollmer in front of an umlaut-studded Carnegie blackboard this fall.



Spanish instructor Maria Elena Doleman and Peruvian economist Jorge Vega, now in their third year of co-teaching economics in Spanish.

'As a professor, it's exciting to know that you're doing something that just isn't usual, *and* bringing students to a much higher level of understanding.'

complex ideas in a second tongue. *That* burden rests on the students, who are thus motivated to develop fluency in the language as fast as possible.

"[The bridge students] are scared stiff at the beginning of the course," Peterson says. "They know that it is going to be hard, but what is even more threatening is that they're in a class with native speakers. It's a powerful drive to make sure they do as well as possible."

The presence of these more fluent students certainly makes the bridge students feel self-conscious—at first. "I didn't want to speak out in class in front of all those native speakers," junior Burke admits.

"I felt intimidated a bit," says Inell Rolle '87, a spring 1986 bridge student. "If I wanted to ask a question, I wondered if the sentence was going to come out right."

These feelings soon evaporate. Vega recalls the progress achieved in last year's class: "It was difficult at the beginning, I think, for all of us. But at the end, almost everybody was fluent—they knew what we were talking about, they had read articles in Spanish. Everybody was trying to speak in class."

In fact, by course's end many of Vega's bridge students perform on a par with native speakers. Since there is no question of watering down the

course's content, Vega says he has to find other ways to get the message across.

"It's a new way to teach Spanish," says Vega, who is impressed by his bridge students' swift progress in the language. "I am sure they would never be able to learn the terminology and read the type of articles [I assign] if they just studied regular courses in language."

When he's not at Macalester, Vega is professor of economics at Universidad Catholica de Peru, in Lima. (He has also served as an economic advisor to the Peruvian Ministry of Economy, Finance, and Commerce.) But he's become a regular visitor to the Macalester faculty; this is his third year as a Macalester visiting professor. After one semester on campus as a Fulbright scholar, he returned last year to teach a second bridge class in political science. This fall Vega takes the plunge a third time, teaching "Poverty in Latin America" in Spanish, while Doleman again teaches the accompanying language class.

Bridge courses first appeared at Macalester in the mid-1970s, when they were primarily used as a part of Macalester's English as a Second Language (ESL) program. At that time, a recent expansion of the college's international program had brought in large numbers of students whose English was still a little shaky. Bridge courses orga-



A student in this fall's "Poverty in Latin America" class—taught entirely in Spanish.

nized by professors Jerry Pitzl and David Lanegran (along with others) paired geography instruction in English with a language support class.

"Macalester has always had as its goal in ESL to make people functionally competent in academic settings—a very well-defined goal," Pat Peterson says. "There comes a point when [ESL] students have a fairly good grasp of English, and what they really need to do is cope with the most authentic [classroom] situation. . . . There's just no way to get over that hard adjustment except to do it."

Peterson and Lanegran later tried introducing some of the principles of bridge instruction into a non-ESL course. They discovered that a German-language atlas (*Seydlitz Weltatlas*) worked well as a beginning-language text—you don't need to know German to interpret a German map. So geography students began picking up German words and phrases through the atlas, also gaining demographic and political information not available in American texts: a double blessing. (The French and history departments have since participated in similar experiments.)

It wasn't long before the bridge concept jumped from ESL to foreign-language departments. The transition makes educational sense, Peterson says: "There is no real difference [between] teaching ESL to international students [and] teaching German to

American students. It really is not a big leap to make."

Nevertheless, Macalester seems to be the only U.S. college to have made that leap. Peterson knows of no other school that applies bridge methods to the teaching of foreign languages, although she says some California institutions use it in teaching ESL.

Macalester had all the ingredients to make the bridge concept work: strong language departments, students attuned to international studies and eager to hear the views of visiting foreign professors, and a history of cooperation between academic departments. And its small size didn't hurt.

Of course, neither advanced foreign-language courses nor international faculty members are new to Macalester. Bridge courses' innovation lies in the way they combine the two elements, capitalizing on foreign scholars' *non-language* expertise.

"You're bringing in another subject matter," says Virginia Schubert, professor of French and coordinator of international studies. There's nothing wrong with the traditional approach of teaching foreign countries through their literature, she says—except that students unconsciously get the idea that talking in French, for example, means talking about Camus and Voltaire. Bridge courses provide a new entree into foreign culture.

This entree attracts a broad range of participants—language majors, science majors, freshmen, seniors. Right now, students need at least an intermediate level of language proficiency (equivalent to four semesters' study) to sign up for bridge classes, but Peterson thinks students even less fluent could benefit from the courses.

Often, language instructors like Doleman and Peterson find they get as much of an educational workout as their students. Trained in language and literature, they must master the subject—geography, economics, government—along with the students, sometimes sitting in on most of the visiting scholars' lectures.

"It's like teaching two courses at once," Peterson says. Schubert elaborates: "The whole thing has to be developed specifically for what is being taught—as it is being taught."

Standard language textbooks don't work here, so the language instructor must create new materials—sometimes in a hurry. "I allow myself two hours

between [Vega's] class and mine so I can develop some material in between," says Doleman, who spent part of summer 1986 in Peru preparing for Vega's fall course on Peruvian society.

The instructors' hard work brings rewards. "As a professor, it's exciting to know that you're doing something that just isn't usual, *and* bringing students to a much higher level of understanding," Peterson says. And, she adds, a satisfying collaboration can result between the visiting scholar and the language instructor: "It's fun not to be alone in the classroom all the time."

Macalester's bridge program depends on a steady supply of foreign scholars to campus, many funded by the Fulbright program and by Macalester's Humphrey Endowed Professorship.

"Our goal has been to bring at least one foreign visiting scholar every semester to Macalester," Schubert says. "In fact, it turns out that we have had several more than that."

Macalester is fortunate in this, Schubert emphasizes. "Small colleges like Macalester very often don't have Fulbright scholars," she says. "A lot of Fulbright scholars go to large universities because they want to do research rather than teaching." In soliciting Fulbright professors, Schubert says, Macalester is careful to approach those who are familiar not just with the U.S. educational system, but also with teaching in a liberal-arts college. "[It's] different from just going in, giving your lecture for an hour, and walking out," she says.

Modern technology helps. Videotapes of all


Vega's lectures are on file at the Humanities Learning Center, so his students can go over particularly difficult words and phrases at their leisure. Some of the language classes, as well, are taped for students' review. Unlike the lecture course, language classes center on discussions, and students say reviewing the latter is sometimes a painful process for them.

"You can hear if you have an accent or not," Burke says—"how you sound when you speak Spanish."

But acquiring proficiency in the class brings instant rewards, Rolle says: "When you have to take notes [in Spanish], and those notes are important, you just have to go back and read and study them."

The future of the program, depending as it does on outside funding and compatible visiting professors, is difficult to plan. Bridge courses will thrive at Macalester, teachers say, as long as distinguished foreign scholars continue to be attracted to campus.

Virginia Schubert already has her sights set on the program's future. "I hope we'll go to French next," she says. "It's French's turn." This development would be particularly appropriate now, she says, since 1989 marks the bicentennial of the French Revolution.

A fitting hope for a revolutionary educational concept. 

Free-lance writer Jack El-Hai, who says he speaks English well, "gets by" in Spanish, and can swear in Greek, lives in Minneapolis.



'It was difficult at the beginning for all of us. But at the end, everybody was trying to speak in class.'

Students in Peruvian scholar Jorge Vega's class share a light moment early this semester.

Walking *in* Tall Cotton



Photos by Jim Hansen

Chicago freshman Megan Johnson (left), with her parents, Lee Johnson and Kathryn Frank, arriving at Macalester early this September.

Macalester's swift ascension to the national ranks exemplifies a Minnesota renewal in private liberal-arts education.

by George R. Dixon '75

While Bob Gavin's third child was deciding where to attend college, Gavin decided to collect the barrage of direct-mail solicitations that had arrived at his house. After filling a couple of shopping bags with letters and brochures, most of them printed on heavy, expensive stock and liberally sprinkled with full-color photography, Gavin began collating the claims of the schools he had never heard of. Most of them described themselves more or less as follows: "a small, high-quality liberal-arts college with a faculty committed to excellent teaching and excellent scholarship."

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All told, solicitations had arrived from some 250 such colleges, some obscure enough to border on invisibility. All singing their own praises. All after Bob Gavin's child.

Gavin's interest was more than just parental. That is because two and a half years ago, Gavin [Robert M. Gavin, Jr.], a native of Minnesota, left Pennsylvania's Haverford College, one of the more elite and heavily endowed colleges in the nation [where he was provost], to head Macalester College in Saint Paul—another small, high-quality liberal-arts college with a faculty committed to excellent teaching and excellent scholarship. Macalester at the time was admitting most of the high-school students who applied for admission, but it's a different story today. In just a few years, Macalester has mounted a comeback that exemplifies a renewal of private postsecondary education in Minnesota that is only slowly being acknowledged.

These are supposed to be the student-starved '80s for Minnesota's 17 private liberal-arts colleges—not years of record enrollments. Marketing and old-fashioned product positioning—plus a little help from a stock market run-up that has turned onemodest endowments into deep financial reservoirs—have joined forces to thwart demographics.

Today, enrollments at many of Minnesota's private liberal-arts colleges are at their highest point ever. "Enrollment management," which developed in response to projected and actual declines in numbers of high-school seniors, has become a science Minnesota has mastered.

And while competition for spaces in most Minnesota colleges is far from intense—admitting eight or nine of every 10 applicants is typical—at least two Minnesota schools, Carleton and Macalester, are becoming among the most selective in the nation.

Carleton, which was forced to suffer an acceptance rate of 82 percent in 1976, last year accepted only about 42 percent of those who applied. Macalester, meanwhile, experienced a jump of nearly 30 percent in applications for each of the last three years. Applications to Macalester have, in fact, nearly doubled since 1983, when it admitted more than eight out of 10 applicants. The school has already met an institutional objective set several years ago to achieve an acceptance rate of 50 percent by 1990; if current trends continue, Macalester and Carleton may both, in the next three years, be among the five or 10 most selective liberal-arts colleges in the nation.

Educators seem to believe that an old-fashioned liberal-arts degree is becoming once again a valuable career commodity—serving as an antidote,



If current trends continue, Macalester and Carleton may both, in the next three years, be among the five or 10 most selective liberal-arts colleges in the nation.

they feel, to rigidities and narrowness imposed by specialized professional (and vocational) training. Says Larry Osnes, the president of the Minnesota Private College Council (a fundraising and lobbying organization run by Minnesota's 17 private colleges): "I would like to believe that as the world gets more complicated, a liberal-arts education prepares people for those complexities. A liberal-arts education... provides a set of skills you take with you throughout life."

However evident the utility of such skills might be, colleges face a marketing challenge of immense dimensions. There are nearly 2,500 postsecondary educational institutions in the United States. Competing in an oversupplied market requires a heavy emphasis on marketing. "Positioning," crucial to the success of any product, has become essential when the product is a liberal-arts degree.

Carleton College is a good illustration. The school created a stir among educators for its pioneering marketing work in the late 1970s, which has paid off today in a record number of applicants and a high national profile. The Carleton model has been adopted by schools across the country—including, to a certain extent, Macalester.

[Carleton's] effort involved adopting a marketing orientation that was rare at the time for small liberal-arts colleges. The foremost objective was increasing Carleton's "share" of its most important markets—including its primary market, the Twin Cities. By surveying freshmen and high-school seniors who declined invitations to apply to

Walking in Tall Cotton

Carleton or who turned down Carleton's offer of admission, Carleton officials discovered broad-based misconceptions about the school. They also discovered that factors determining a student's willingness to apply—the "hot buttons" of a marketing professional—were often radically different in different regions.

The research allowed Carleton to redesign its admissions literature to be more persuasive to potential students and their parents, and to mount an exhaustive direct-mail campaign using lists of high-scoring students on the college entrance tests that high-school junior and seniors take each year. Eventually, Carleton built yearly prospect pools of as many as 90,000 names—and students at Carleton became one of the most thoroughly analyzed consumer groups extant.

This year, Carleton is taking pains to prevent repeating one of the side effects of its market research. As applications rose and the percentages of accepted students who decided to enroll at Carleton grew, unexpectedly large freshman classes brought campus overcrowding. The same phenomenon has taken place at Macalester College, which enrolled its biggest freshman class ever last year—not by design, but because accepted stu-

dents are enrolling at Macalester in unprecedented and unanticipated numbers.

There are other similarities between Macalester and Carleton.

Both, for example, enroll a majority of students from outside of Minnesota; neither has yet felt constrained to offer adult-education outreach programs like other private colleges; and both aspire for acceptance among the elite of the nation's private colleges, although Carleton has come closer to that mark than Macalester.

Macalester suffered more than Carleton did from financial and demographic pressures in the 1970s. "The wheels were off," says one educational consultant. Applications and enrollments shrank, and, according to one source, for one period of several months, Macalester officials had to ask wealthy trustees to guarantee the college's payroll. Macalester alumni were sending their children elsewhere, says another educational consultant—to Saint Olaf, for instance, "which was like the Macalester of 25 years ago."

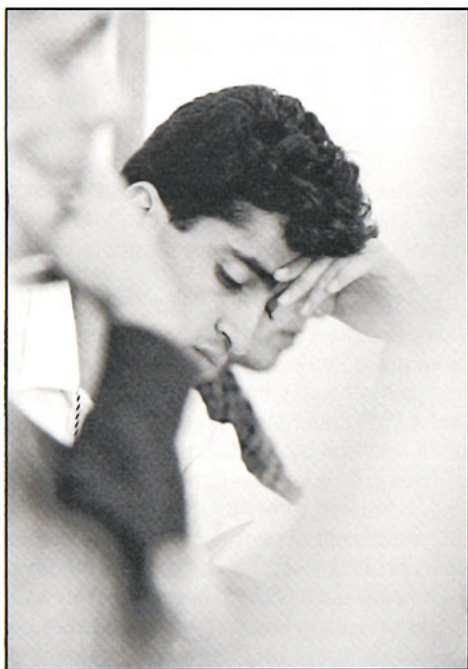
Macalester recently broke ground for a new library, a \$10 million structure that will mimic the improbably Midwestern/Romanesque architecture of Old Main, the college's oldest standing building. The library is part of \$22 million in recent campus improvements and the first academic building to be built on the campus in nearly two decades.

The library is said to be a visible symbol of the revival that will see Macalester enroll its most selective and statistically impressive freshman class ever this year. The revival is frequently attributed to the energizing effects of the arrival of President Gavin and William Shain, a former regional director of admissions at Princeton, who was recruited in 1980 to turn Macalester's admissions program around.

When Shain arrived at Macalester, it was competing for students with a mostly Midwestern coterie of colleges located in places like Beloit, Knox, Lawrence, and Grinnell. Public institutions like the Universities of Minnesota and Wisconsin were also counted among its rivals. Now Macalester has identified what it calls a "peer group" of colleges, a list of 12 that includes Amherst, Carleton, Swarthmore, Haverford, and Williams. "That's the tall cotton in which Bob Gavin likes to walk," says a fundraising consultant for the school.

As at Carleton, changes at Macalester involved clearly defining the "product," understanding its market, and establishing an identity that would firmly cement its position. Especially important

With its traditional emphasis on international programs and an international student body, Macalester 'is way ahead in preparing people to live in this multicultural society.'



to the marketing effort was an expanded and accelerated direct-mail program.

Says Shain, "We were like the proverbial blind men describing the elephant, each of us talking with the internal and external public, each of us describing different parts of the beast." Shain says that the college decided to emphasize three key factors to its market: the school's longstanding international orientation (in recent years, as many as 70 countries have been represented in the student body, and the U.N. flag has flown over Macalester for decades); its cultivated diversity (which for awhile struck more conservative observers as something closer to anarchy); and its metropolitan location, a distinction among institutions that more often than not are surrounded by cornfields.

"We turned down a valedictorian last week for the first time since I've been here," Shain says. "I don't take joy in that, but it's an indication of the good people we didn't have room for because other files came to us stronger."

Catherine Day, vice president for development, who travels widely on fundraising missions, reports that alumni on the East and West coasts tell her that Macalester has achieved "hot" status among high-school seniors and their guidance counselors. Hot or not, the application figures are impressive. Macalester's three-year run of 30-plus percent increases in applications not only tops all other Minnesota schools but leads by a wide margin other members of the Associated Colleges of the Midwest, an umbrella group of leading Midwestern institutions.

Can Macalester really compete with the likes of Amherst and Swarthmore? President Gavin, whose experience at Haverford College left him intimately familiar with elite Eastern institutions, says that Macalester already offers advantages. He finds it more "cosmopolitan," for one thing. In a pointed comparison to his old school, he says: "[Macalester] is more aware of what's going on in the world, not just [in] the suburbs of Philadelphia, New York, and Washington."


Macalester, with its traditional emphasis on international programs and an international student body, "is way ahead in terms of thinking about what liberal-arts education ought to look like to prepare people to live in this multicultural society," Gavin says. Moreover, he says, in the world of hype that now surrounds college marketing, "people are coming here and finding out that what we say in the admissions area is true."

Meanwhile, [other] Minnesota college administrators are far from complacent. On the rapidly



Macalester's new library is a visible symbol of the revival. This year, Macalester will enroll its most selective and statistically impressive freshman class ever.

evolving educational scene, events move quickly these days. Capital fundraising campaigns, which used to occur every 10 years or so, now follow virtually on the heels of each other. Boards of trustees are being asked to take activist roles, and powerful business leaders are becoming sought-after commodities. Private colleges in Minnesota are also becoming more vocal. A study released by the Minnesota Private College Council claimed to show that its 17 members inject \$1.89 billion into Minnesota's economy each year.

The message: What's good for Minnesota's private colleges is good for Minnesota. Yes, there are fewer students today, and the numbers are getting smaller; but Minnesota's private colleges are convinced that their product is good enough to compete in a tough market. 

George R. Dixon '75, who edited Minnesota Monthly magazine from 1978 to 1982, is a free-lance writer, based in Minneapolis, who specializes in corporate communications. His co-authored book on Minnesota's economic history is due out from Windsor Publications late next year. To see how Macalester's current crop of freshmen carries out the college's traditions of academic excellence, service, and internationalism, just turn the page.

Standout Freshman Class Sustains Macalester Traditions

by Jack El-Hai

Macalester's newest freshman class—assembled through the most selective admissions process in the college's history—has a great deal in common with the students who have gone before, according to dean of admissions William M. Shain.

The class of 1991 “seems to bring a knowledge of and commitment to Macalester's special traditions of scholarship, service to others, and curiosity about cultures and value systems beyond one's own,” Shain told the freshmen and their parents at an opening convocation in September.

In addition, “the class represents an exceptionally exciting cross-section even in light of Macalester's traditionally strong commitment to student diversity,” Shain said.

The process of gathering together these 442 highly qualified students began years ago. A strong marketing effort over several years by the admissions office and other on-campus departments, assisted by hundreds of alumni, resulted in 2,193 applications for admission in 1987—the largest total in the college's history and a doubling of applications since 1983. Macalester offered admission to only 50.8 percent of those applicants, a record low figure.

The freshmen enrolled this year represent 42 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, several U.S. trust territories, and 35 foreign countries. They include the highest percentage of American minorities in five years (12 percent of U.S. freshmen).

This year's freshmen have an impressive range and depth of intercultural experiences, putting them in a position to not only benefit from but contribute to the college's long history of internationalism. In addition to the international students in the class, more than one-fifth of the Americans have spent a consecutive month or longer in another nation within

the past four years; among them, they have visited more than 30 countries.

Also consistent with Macalester's traditions, a large number of the entering freshmen indicated on their applications a commitment to community and social service. These students include:

- **Political activists** embracing the full sweep of the liberal-conservative spectrum.
- **Workers** for organizations assisting the elderly, the poor, the disabled, and refugees.

‘You bring a knowledge of and commitment to Macalester's special traditions of scholarship, service, and curiosity about cultures and value systems beyond one's own.’

- **Coordinators and volunteers** in soup kitchens, environmental cleanups, religious retreats, guide-dog training programs, and nuclear-awareness days.
- At least 16 participants in **Students Against Drunk Drivers** and other safe-driving groups.
- At least 18 present or past members of **Amnesty International**.

Scholastic excellence is another ingredient in the mix of qualities that Macalester seeks in its freshmen. Forty-six of the freshmen ranked first or second in their high-school graduating classes. The group includes 51 National Merit Scholars, and it averaged a mean com-

bined score of 1218 on the SAT, the second-highest average ever at Macalester.

The class of 1991 also has pursued a wide variety of extracurricular interests. Among them:

- **Student government**—30 served as class or student-body presidents in high school.
- **Athletics**—83 were captains of athletic teams, and others earned a variety of honors; the group includes a nationally ranked cyclist, a state fencing champion, and a member of a state kayak team.
- **Music**—they play at least two dozen musical instruments: strings, winds, brass, handbells, Hawaiian slack-stringed guitar, and (of course) bagpipes.

Applications to Macalester have increased significantly each of the past four years, while the college has kept the overall size of the student body approximately level. The percentage of students accepted has dropped from 84 percent in 1983 to 50.8 percent this year.

Dean Shain attributes the dramatic increase in applications to the fact that Macalester is becoming better-known nationally and internationally, especially to students for whom Macalester is the right choice—that is, he says, those with high academic achievement, an interest in international and intercultural understanding, and a commitment to service.

Macalester's story is being told through extensive work by the admissions office staff, communication with prospective students by faculty members and by the 600-member network of alumni admissions volunteers, and the college's increasing visibility in media, as well as other channels of communication, Shain says. ✱

Jack El-Hai, whose feature on Macalester's language program appears elsewhere in these pages, is a free-lance writer based in Minneapolis.



With much fun and hard work, the Alumni Association board kicked off a new academic year on Sept. 18–19 at the Alexander Alumni House. The 29-member board is developing career-networking support, better integration of alumni admissions and development efforts, and national alumni clubs to emphasize alumni involvement with the college. Above, President Robert M. Gavin, Jr. (center) with board member Matthew Flora '74 and Philip Ahn '57.

Events from East to West draw Macalester alumni

Career networking, intellectual stimulation, admissions recruiting—all play a part in the Macalester alumni clubs. Here's a sampling of what clubs are doing across the country:

- This June, the **New York** club enjoyed a buffet in the studio of nationally known watercolorist Cecile Johnson '37. Johnson provided a special preview of her paintings, described by *The New York Times* as "good, fresh, realistic work, technically excellent and truly professional." New Yorkers also enjoyed an Oct. 5 dinner at Peccavi, a new restaurant owned by chef Leslie Revsin '66.
Late summer found alumni director Karen McConkey planning some exciting happenings for New York—area parents and alumni with the New York club's board of directors. For additional information on New York events, contact this year's club convener, Deborah Walker '73, at 212/286-2033 (days) or 201/828-4463 (evenings).
- **Saint Paul and Minneapolis** alumni clubs stayed cool during the summer heat by sampling ice-cream sundaes and greeting old friends at two mid-summer events. The clubs also joined forces in September for a potluck and surprise program at Macalester's Alexander Alumni House.

- In August, the Macalester club of **Boston** entertained new freshmen and area alumni at an informal barbecue in Wellesley, Mass., hosted by Faye Peterson Lowe '42 and Douglas Martin Lowe '40. In October, the club was to host a tour and reception for President Robert M. Gavin, Jr., and Provost James B. Stewart at the historic Parkman House.
- It was time to reminisce for a group of 1970s and '80s alumni in **Cleveland** who gathered this fall for an evening at a restaurant (Tangerine Fahrley's) with alumni director Karen McConkey. The event was organized by Warren L. Morris '80 and Betsi Swift Morris '81. Clevelanders, watch your mail for news of another exciting area alumni event.
- **Macalester vs. Trinity.** On Nov. 13–15, you'll find avid football fans from Minnesota, San Antonio, and Fort Worth—Dallas at the City of the Alamo to celebrate the Scots' victory (of course!), walk the River Walk, experience the history of this intriguing city, and meet other enthusiastic Macalester alumni, parents, and football players. Major General Doyle Larson '52 and Lois James Larson '53 will be the energetic coordinators for this event. President Gavin and his wife, Charlotte,

together with vice president for development Catherine Reid Day and associate alumni director Mary Smail, are to bring the group a campus update.

A literary evening, a festive dessert—clubs plan lively do's

Because events are being added as we go to press, this calendar can't be definitive. You can always call the Alumni Office, 612/696-6295, for more information about events in your area.

Dec. 3: The Macalester club of **Chicago** sponsors an evening with nationally known author and Macalester English professor Susan Allen Toth at the historic Newberry Library. For more information, contact Margaret Mohr '80 at 312/787-7242 (evenings), or Anne Grussing '58 at 312/964-8187 (evenings).

Dec. 4: **Saint Paul and Minneapolis** clubs attend the Macalester College Concert Choir's "Festive Dessert and Concert." Contact Jim Horn '74 at 612/690-3051 for further details.

Jan. 22–23: The Alumni Association board meets at the Alexander Alumni House, Macalester College.

Week of Jan. 25: **San Diego and Los Angeles** club events are being planned. Call the alumni office for more information.

February: The **Boston** club plans its annual Winter Weekend. Call the alumni office for details.

February: Still being planned are gatherings of Macalester club alumni, friends, and parents in sunny **Florida**. The alumni office can give details.

March 17–18: A **Phoenix** Symphony concert hosted by orchestra manager Russell P. Allen '74, plus a Mexican evening in **Tucson** at the Spanish-style hacienda of Dorothy Flint Novak '32 and Milan Novak '29.

March 24–30: The Macalester Concert Choir is planning a West Coast tour. Alumni in **San Francisco, Sacramento, Eugene (Ore.), Portland, and Seattle** will host students, renew Macalester connections, and enjoy outstanding choral music. Places and times to be announced.

Honoring our most distinguished alumni

Macalester alumni are seldom satisfied to leave the world as it is; they contribute significantly to its improvement in their professions, their communities, their personal lives. Always, a few emerge to provide special inspiration and leadership.

The five men and women who received the Alumni Association's Distinguished Citizen citation during Alumni Reunion Weekend last June have chosen a wide range of venues in which to distinguish themselves, a wide range of activities to make the world a better place. To nominate a candidate for the 1988 citation, see p. 26.



Academic, spiritual leader

The first black American since 1910 to be commissioned by the American Baptist Convention, the Rev. **Milton Andrew Combs, Sr., '52** served with distinction as a missionary in Burma for five years, then became a pastor and teacher in California. A developer of the ethnic-studies program at Solano Community College, where he now teaches, he has also written on black history and created courses to help students better understand our global society.

Serving country and college

In his distinguished U.S. Air Force career, Major General **Doyle Larson '52** served as a Russian linguist, commanded three reconnaissance squadrons, flew 71 combat missions in Vietnam, and held key security and intelligence positions. His many decorations include two Distinguished Service Medals, the Defense Department's highest peacetime decoration. He's also a longtime leader in Macalester's Alumni Association, M Club, and fundraising for the college.





Improving education

Dean of the School of Education at American University, **L. Lee Knepfelkamp '67** has gained national recognition among fellow educators for her expertise on how students learn and how administrators make decisions. A prolific researcher, writer, adviser, and consultant, she travels frequently to address professional meetings and lead faculty-staff workshops on improving college teaching and student personnel services.

Promoting global understanding

Dennis Peterson '65 embodies Macalester's spirit of internationalism through continuing efforts to promote world understanding. An Iowa State University staff member, he helps 2,600 foreign nationals adjust to life in this country and integrate themselves into campus life; he has been a leader in promoting international educational exchange. "Friends of Guatemalan Refugees," a non-profit organization he created, sells textiles woven by refugees.



Connecting body and mind

Ruth DeBeer Stricker '57 was a pioneer in finding ways to help people combine physical activity with music and drama to achieve new balance and health. Her new "center for balance and fitness" helps people—especially those with physical disabilities and pain—find new hope and health through exercise and fitness. She has served the college as trustee, Alumni Association president, and more, and is greatly involved in the community.

sought in theory should be put in practice in life. The spirit of his thought and life is significantly indicated in the title of his 1970 book, *Love-Justice*. He had a passion for justice—especially with respect to racial and religious minorities, the economically deprived, and the conduct of international affairs. He was ever ready to jeopardize his own security for the sake of fairness to the oppressed and the insecure, and he repeatedly spoke out in public address and in the media on behalf of unpopular justice.

In the years of his retirement, he continued actively to support good causes. And in the years of his excruciating pain [he died of rheumatoid arthritis], he was steadfastly courageous, uncomplaining, and cheerful. Here among us, admired and loved by those who knew him, has lived and labored a wise philosopher and a great and good man.

Thomas E. Hill
Professor Emeritus of Philosophy
Montreat, N.C.

'Stand up! Bow!'

Reflections on "East Meets West"
[August]:

My wife Kristi Jensen and I are currently teaching English in the Republic of China, and we've been noticing some differences between the customs in Taiwan and in the West.

- On a crowded city bus in Taipei, when someone vacates a seat, the people standing nearby will rarely sit there immediately. Even if they want to sit, they'll wait at least one or two stops before doing so. Westerners plop down at the first sight of an open seat.
- Left-handed people are rare here; they are forced at an early age to change to using their right hand. One reason for this practice becomes obvious at Chinese banquets, where 12 people are crowded at round tables. A lefty would surely knock elbows with the person to his left!
- I teach at a private high school here in Taipei. At the start of every class

period, a class leader gives out orders: "Stand up! Bow!" The whole class obeys, saying in unison, "Teacher, how are you?"

The first time I experienced this as a teacher, I was embarrassed; I wanted to turn around and see whom they were addressing all this respect to. But I soon got used to it. In fact, if I tried to cut it out of my class, my students would label me a pushover. And after teaching classes of 50 students, I appreciate the necessity of order and mutual respect.

- Elementary schools in Taiwan are coeducational, but most junior and senior high schools are separated into all-male and all-female classes. Each class stays in the same room from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., going outside only for gym classes. They even eat lunch—brought in by elderly gentlemen who work for the school food service—at their desks.

I'm finding that a liberal-arts degree need not merely be a luxury for those who enjoy the pursuit of knowledge. The international perspective at Mac can prepare us for work and/or service around the world. International jobs are there, but people interested in them need to be ready to respond quickly and wisely to such opportunities.

That's the kind of sensitivity I was able to develop at Macalester. I'm much better off for having bumped elbows with so many fellow students from around the world.

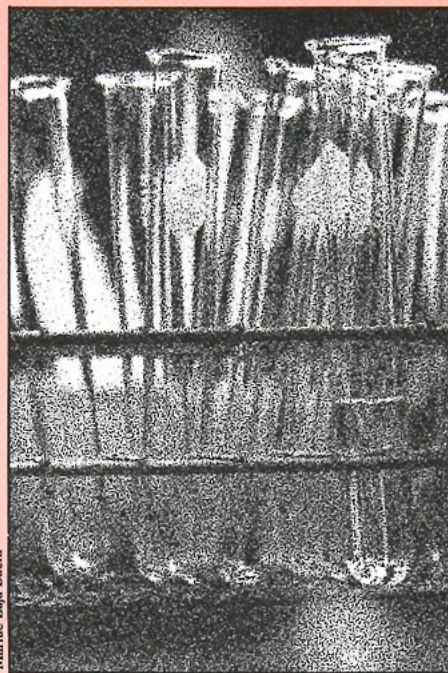
Paul Preston '81
47-5 Wenchow Street (4F)
Taipei, 10616, Taiwan

Because Preston says he'd like to hear from former classmates and professors, we're including his full address.

— Editor

"Neither position particularly impressed me" (Texas). Surprisingly, nearly all the comments came from the Benson-McGinnis faction; Rabuse supporters apparently preferred to let their votes speak for themselves.

"Dwight's arguments were quite convincing," said a Wyoming resident, "but I



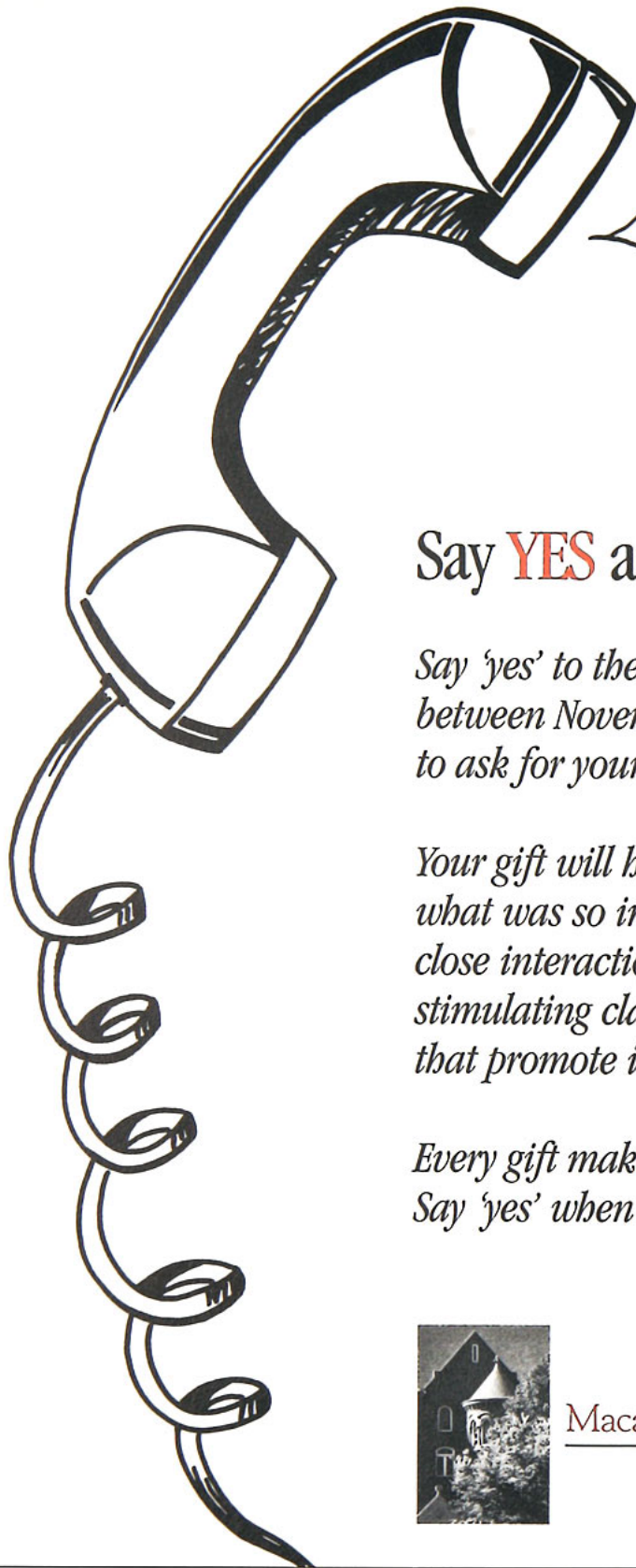
Marnie Lija Baehr

feel that testing is an invasion. There's got to be a better way."

One parent of a former student enclosed a page-long letter: "Our Constitution is supposed to prevent this kind of thing [drug testing] from happening," it ran in part. "It guarantees equality and equal treatment under the law. The correct approach is to judge the worker on the basis of job performance."

Most eloquent of all was the manifesto at the bottom of one Benson-McGinnis ballot from Massachusetts: "It cost lives to gain our civil rights. It may cost more lives to keep them. Our civil rights are worth the price."

—Rebecca Ganzel, Managing Editor



JA! ¡SI!

Oui! 好

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Say 'yes' when the Annual Fund volunteer calls you.*



Macalester College Annual Fund

Among good friends

Friends reunite as fall 1987 brings together the largest Macalester College student body since 1973. As classes began for Macalester's 103rd year, a very special group of new students joined a larger-than-ever percentage of returning students. To read about the new freshman class, see page 16.



Ed Bock

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